



# House of Commons Debates

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SIXTH SESSION—SEVENTH PARLIAMENT

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## SPEECH

OF

SIR JAMES GRANT, M.P.

ON THE

## REMEDIAL BILL

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OTTAWA, THURSDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1896.

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SIR JAMES GRANT. Mr. Speaker, the question at present before this House is probably one of the most important in the history of our country. It strikes at the very root of the constitution, and it is the keynote of our future happiness. I sat in this chamber at the commencement of confederation, and looking around this hall now, I find that here are very few present who took part at that time in the deliberation of the affairs of this country. Having come in contact with the fathers of confederation, and having personally heard their views expressed, I was pleased beyond measure to know the broad and comprehensive, and liberal opinions, which these gentlemen held on all questions connected with religious matters. At that time, some of the ablest men who ever lived in the Dominion of Canada, were met in this House. Need I mention the late Hon. Joseph Howe, who frequently spoke from the opposite side of the chamber, displaying a pure eloquence, and a political erudition such as any man might well feel proud of. Associated with him, was the late Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a man who inherited the intellectual power and genius of many of his predecessors who sprung from that great Emerald Isle, and we had also, Sir George Cartier and Sir John A. Macdonald. These two are names well known in the history of this country. They were men who by their energy, their perseverance, and their ability, contributed in so great a degree to promote the best

interests of this Dominion. We have to-day the monuments of these two great Canadians, standing almost side by side in the cool air of the surrounding atmosphere. But, their memories are warm in the hearts of the people of Canada. And why? It is because on every occasion they accorded equal rights and equal privileges to all classes of the community. I am pleased beyond measure to see one of the illustrious fathers of confederation present here with us to-day. Sir Charles Tupper was then on the floor of this House, and although many years have passed over his head, he still appears to maintain the same intellectual activity and physical power that he did in the days of old. I say, Sir, that an honour has been conferred upon him in selecting him as leader of this House; the highest and most distinguished position that can be conferred upon any man, because he has been called to it by the voice of the people of Canada, the voice of the members of this House, and the voice of the Government of the day. I have heard some rather severe criticism on my hon. friend (Sir Charles Tupper) within the last week or two. I am surprised beyond measure that those who should have the good of the country at heart, take such small, microscopic views of matters which are occasionally presented to this House. Sir Charles Tupper has been in parliamentary life for over forty years. In his own province he established a name and a reputation for the advance-

ment of public affairs, and since he came in to the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, are we not aware, that many of the great questions upon which the happiness the welfare and the prosperity of our people rests, emanated from him, and from the genius of those with whom he was associated. Not only in Canada has the Secretary of State (Sir Charles Tupper) taken an active part in guiding the best interests of this country, but representing us in Great Britain he has come in contact with many of the leading men of the present day, and so energetically and so ably has he represented the cause of our country before them, that to-day, Canada stands in a higher position in the eyes of the world than ever she did before. In making a slight review of the great question of confederation, which has been presented to this House so succinctly by that hon. gentleman, I have no desire to go over the ground again. We know what confederation has accomplished for Canada. It has done much for our people; it has united us into a homogeneous whole, it has brought us together from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and to-day we enjoy cherished privileges under the benign influence of confederation. It is not necessary for me to refer to the political issues connected with confederation. The hon. member for Prince Edward Island (Mr. Davies) a few days ago, wished to go back to some of the little difficulties that sprung up, from what I would call, a mere provincialism which attacked the basis upon which confederation was to rest, merely for some local object and for some local purpose. But, Sir, I am happy to say to-day, that confederation has emerged entirely out of that small sphere of operation, and it is now known everywhere, that through the progressive action of our public men, through the co-operation of our citizens, through the assistance of the leading minds of this portion of the North American continent, we have here, law and order, and we have the extension of those civil rights and civil privileges which have been referred to so ably on this instructive occasion.

The question which we now more particularly have to deal with, has been dwelt upon at length by several of the gentlemen who have spoken, especially by the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster), by the ex-Minister of Justice (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper), the present Minister of Justice (Mr. Dickey), by the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy), and by the hon. member for Bothwell (Mr. Mills), whom the late Sir John Macdonald called the Erskine May of this House. I am glad, indeed, to pay that hon. gentleman a compliment, because I know well that to-day there are few men in Canada who understand the laws of this country, and the laws of the world generally, better than he does. He has an associate here in the hon. member for Albert (Mr. Weldon), who is also a law-giver. Yet I was surprised and amaz-

ed, Mr. Speaker, to find with all the information they possess, profound as they are, with all the legal acquirements they enjoy, advocating on the floor of this House a course contrary to their own principles, and contrary to their own minds; because, if they are possessed of the ideas of progress, they could not go against a measure like this. I read in a late number of the Ottawa "Citizen" this whole question in a nutshell:

The question before the country is this: The Manitoba government having refused to modify its legislation so as to permit Roman Catholics to have schools of their own, should the Federal Government interfere? It is trifling with the intelligence of the public to answer by saying: "I am in favour of conciliation!" Every one is in favour of conciliation; but suppose your conciliation does not work. What then? For six years this matter has been the source of a dangerous agitation, but the Greenway government has done nothing to remove the cause of strife.

In May, 1894, the Cardinal, Archbishops and Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church petitioned the Governor General in Council to disallow the Manitoba School Act of 1894. By Order in Council of 26th July, 1894, the Privy Council recommended that the petition should be transmitted to the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, and expressed the hope that the legislature of that province should take steps to remove the grievances complained of in the petition.

Again, by Order in Council of July 27th, 1895, the Dominion Government invited the Manitoba government to enter into friendly negotiations in order to ascertain how far the latter were prepared to go in meeting the wishes of the minority, so that the Dominion might, if possible, be relieved from the duty of intervening. The provincial authorities paid no attention to the invitation, and it was publicly and triumphantly declared that they had no intention of helping the Federal Government out of a difficulty.

I need not go over all the ground that has been already traversed so well on this important question. There it is in a nutshell; and what are we to do now? This is a question for which the constitution of our country is responsible. We have a confederation by mutual consent. Where is the leader of the Opposition, to-day, with his motion for the six months' hoist? He is precisely in the same position that he has been in with his trade policy. For the last few years he has been wandering about, trying to formulate the principles of a trade policy; and, just like the kaleidoscope, every turn presented a new view, and that was grasped in the hope that something would come out of it. The people of this country are possessed of common sense; they have fixed in their minds the principles of trade and commerce; they know thoroughly what will result from certain lines of policy; they know that that hon. gentleman, in a short space of time, has propounded no less than three distinct lines of trade policy; and what have the public to say? That hon. gentleman has failed to grasp the exact position. Can we go upon one line of trade to-day,

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and change it to-morrow? Far from it. Who would, under such circumstances, invest in the trade of this country? We must have a definite policy in our trade, such as is carried out by the Liberal-Conservative party; and if the Liberal-Conservative party has achieved success, has built up a name and reputation for itself, and is recognized as one of the great progressive parties on this North American continent, it is because it has eliminated the best policy that could be produced by the master-minds of that great party; and to-day Canada's trade policy stands on a permanent and sure foundation.

Now, the hon. leader of the Opposition, in taking hold of this Manitoba school question, commenced some time ago by telling the Government that they were delaying in bringing it to a final issue. Why were they delaying? He wanted it immediately settled. For whom did he want it settled? He wanted it settled for those whom he was representing; and who it is his pride and privilege to represent to-day. He represents one of the great factors in the prosperity of this country—that great French nationality that, along with the Anglo-Saxons of this country, have built up the name and reputation of Canada—that French nationality, whose history has been written by Garneau and Ferland, who have given us a noble record of the French ancestry—of men, who, in the days of Champlain, managed to paddle their own canoes on the majestic waters of this country, and assisted in laying those foundations of peace, comfort and prosperity that the people of Canada are enjoying to-day. Gentlemen, you have reason to feel proud of your French nationality. In art, in literature and in science it has made a worthy reputation, as was pointed out yesterday by the learned professor from Albert. I was pleased beyond measure to listen to that portion of his able and exhaustive address; but when I considered the other lines of argument he adopted, I came to the conclusion that there was a smallness of idea—a contracted provincial idea, governing his mind. In connection with this great question of the Remedial Bill now before the House, we know what this French nationality has done. We know what Sir George Cartier, Lafontaine, and many other men of that nationality I could name have done for this country. I see on the other side of this Chamber Mr. Bourassa and Sir Hector Langevin, two of those who were present here with me at confederation. Long may they live to enjoy those privileges that have been extended to them. I am sure that if they revert to that time, and think of those men, who by their magnificent intellectual power, their sagacity and their ability to see through the great problems of national life, they will at once say with me that the men who had the distinguished privilege of occupying seats on the floor of this House at the in-

tial stage of confederation, enjoyed a privilege which has been the opportunity of but a few. And if those great men have passed away, they have left a noble record behind them. I might say, with the illustrious poet of the past, that man who now slumbers among the great dead of the American continent:

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

I expect that in the discussion of this question, the representatives of that great nationality will leave behind them such a record that the great church that assists them in all the affairs of life, will say to each of them: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"; I am pleased beyond measure that you have adopted the advice and are following the example of the member for Ottawa County (Mr. Devlin). And rely upon it that the brilliancy of intellect is there just as bright as the coruscations of the galvanic battery. He gave this House, only a few days ago, an evidence of his genius, his common sense and his desire to promote what will give prosperity to that great Catholic community from one end of the Dominion to the other.

A great legal light in the province of Quebec has said that he will vote against this Bill because it is not sufficient to meet our demands. Now, that is a remarkable assertion. Have we not got the very highest authority in the country acquiescing in what is done in this Bill? Have we not that Bill endorsed by their letters and telegrams? And yet, although our fathers are pleased, forsooth the sons of judges, who know more than their fathers ever knew, are willing to remain in the background and vote against a measure which gives equal rights and justice to all. Is that the way to maintain their provincial or Dominion influence?

I shall treat the subject now very briefly, because I am very well aware of the fact that it has been discussed so frequently and thoroughly on the floor of this House that there is very little new that I can present to you. But besides having been present at the forming of confederation, I find myself in a somewhat unique position. Therefore, I desire on this interesting occasion to express my views, and I trust you will excuse any egotism of which I may be guilty in presenting them to you. I am at present almost the senior trustee of the chief Protestant university of Ontario, Queen's College, Kingston. And yet, notwithstanding that fact, I have been elected the representative of the chief Catholic University of Ontario, the University of Ottawa, in the councils of Ontario, besides being president of the Catholic Hospital. These are evidences of the liberality and generosity of my Roman Catholic fellow-citizens, and during the forty years that I have been as-



sociated with these people, by night and by day, I have never yet seen anything in our relations that was not worthy of the highest possible commendation.

This is a country in which there must be a spirit of toleration. I know very well, that we have a great Orange body in this country, but, if we have, in that body we have men of liberality and generosity. The present Premier of the Dominion (Sir Mackenzie Bowell) is a well-known Orangeman, who has reason to feel proud of the distinguished position he now occupies, as head of this country, and, although he is an Orangeman, we know perfectly well, that on every public or private occasion, whenever the opportunity was afforded him, he has guarded well the rights of Catholics and Protestants in a manner of which any Catholic or Protestant might well be proud. This is the broad spirit of toleration that I wish to see exercised by this House. In the opposition brought against this Remedial Bill, in the various attempts that have been made to thwart the efforts of the Government to carry it to a final and successful issue, I have failed to see exercised that great and grand principle of toleration that ought to exist in the minds of the leaders in the Reform ranks to-day.

I know perfectly well, that Canada has reason to feel proud of her sons. I do not for one moment fancy, that we have all the ability on our side. Very far from it. What did the Hon. Edward Blake, when he occupied a prominent position in this country, say with reference to this subject? Was he not impressed with its importance? Did he not seize the first opportunity of formulating his ideas and putting them before this country in a tangible form? Here is an abstract of the observations he made:

I suggest that for the peace and good government of Canada, you should take power in the House of Parliament to refer to an impartial and high judicial tribunal the solution of questions which would otherwise tend to the disintegration and confusion of the Canadian people.

Such an expression of opinion from a gentleman who not only held one of the first positions in Canada on account of his great legal ability, but who to-day holds in the councils of Great Britain a distinguished position, and is looked up to as a man who, I am proud to say, has done great credit, by his forensic ability, to this Dominion of ours—should have great weight with us.

The late Sir John Macdonald, when this statement was made by the Hon. Mr. Blake, at once formulated a Bill and presented it to Parliament; and, as a result, we have this Act of Parliament, by virtue of which this very school question came before our own courts and subsequently went before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of England.

In 1893, the hon. leader of the Opposition (Mr. Laurier) concluded that the Govern-

ment was advocating a policy of delay, and uncertainty, which he considered extremely prejudicial to our national light. What about the powerful agitation that was waged against the Government, if the line of argument that was advocated, not only by the late Sir John Thompson, but also by the present Premier, was not carried out? Has there been any great agitation in the Dominion since this question came before Parliament? We had a large meeting in Toronto the other day; and the very important measure which emanated from this House, and was sent up to the important individuals assembled at that meeting—and, no doubt, they are very important—was merely summed up in a word or two. The hon. member for North York (Mr. Mulock) bore a message to those present from his leader at Ottawa. He told this important meeting, that the hon. leader of the Opposition was in favour of conciliation, rather than coercion.

Mr. MULOCK. What paper are you quoting from?

Sir JAMES GRANT. The Ottawa "Citizen," which copied the article from the Toronto "Globe," and that, you know, is almost the Bible of Ontario.

Mr. EDGAR. Not copied.

Sir JAMES GRANT. What does this conciliation mean? Is it a commission? Is conciliation a six months' hoist—a six months' hoist! That six months' hoist is, probably one of the most ridiculous propositions ever submitted to this House. The very clergy are told, forsooth, by the leader of the Opposition, that he is not going to give them what they want. He says to them: You must take a back seat; I know more than you do. It is high time the clergy should learn that I am not going to be dictated to by them. Sir, their opinions are worth listening to. They are men possessed of ability, they have largely contributed to the advancement of the material interests of this country; and to-day the clergy of Quebec, both Protestant and Catholic; and the clergy of Ontario, occupy positions side by side, agreeing with each other, united with each other, coalescing with each other in the advancement of great measures for the welfare of the people of this country. Now, in 1894, what was the opinion of the leader of the Opposition, who now asks for the six months' hoist?

The longer this question is kept before the public, the worse it is for the people of Canada. It is a question upon which there should be an immediate and speedy answer.

Now, this is just what we advocate to-day. The leader of the Opposition is not settled in his ideas, he does not know what to ask for. He cannot agree with the people; he

cannot agree with his church. He does not know what is necessary to maintain the religion and peace of the people of this country any more than he knows how to retain our trade and commerce. A short time ago he contended that this commission was only a subterfuge; yet when he spoke in Montreal it was the chief plank in his platform. Let me say, Sir, that we do not require the cathode rays to see through the chief plank in the plank of the Liberal-Conservative party. Our plank on this school question is transparent, we can see it at first glance. Sir, I look around this chamber and observe the members who come from the province of Ontario, that great province which has contributed largely to the reputation of Canada, a province which has produced magnificent institutions, a province which has turned out great men, and let me say that we have a faithful phalanx in this House to-day, we have got men of integrity, of uprightness, who are able to see correctly through this great problem. No doubt they have considered this question well, and when the time comes for them to give a vote on it, I trust they will consider well what they are doing, and that they will not be content to leave this life without making an excellent record. Sir, the man who is afraid of local interests, who thinks he will not gain his election if he votes for this Bill, is afraid of doing his duty in the interests of this great country, and in the interest of the maintenance of its institutions. Sir, a short time ago, the leader of the Opposition, when he was accompanied by his man Friday, the member for L'Islet (Mr. Tarte), asked what was the policy of the Liberal-Conservative party upon this Manitoba school question, he said: Our position is defined and placed beyond doubt. But where is the leader of the Opposition to-day, with his amendment for the six months' hoist? He says the Conservative party have asked him to give them some information, to formulate a policy for them. What an absurd idea. Did the Conservative Government ever ask the Reformers to formulate a policy for them? No, Sir, far from it. They did not even consult him in drawing up the Remedial Bill, nor did they consult him in some other great measures they have placed before this country. The leader of the Opposition says he wants justice for his countrymen and for the minority in the province of Quebec. I should like to know if the minority in the province of Quebec are not asking to-day for justice to the minority in Manitoba, through the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce, who represents the Protestant minority of Quebec in this Government? Their interests have been protected by confederation, and in the course they are taking on this question, they are protecting their interests in the future. But is the course of the Reform party on this question likely to benefit the Protestant minority in Quebec? No,

they are sowing the seeds of dissension, they are spreading ideas which, if acted upon, will sap the very foundations of confederation, which the fathers of that measure worked so hard to accomplish. The leader of the Opposition says there must be no coercion for Manitoba. Sir, let us consider this question, and reflect upon where it originated, in Manitoba, that new province, which requires all the assistance we can possibly give it in order to promote that prosperity that it is now enjoying; let us remember that it was the hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Martin) was one of the prime actors in destroying separate schools, and that the member for Simcoe (Mr. McCarthy) was one of the prime actors in destroying the dual language in that province. When Lord Dufferin was in Canada, some twenty years ago, and when he visited Winnipeg on his way to the Pacific coast, he used these words:

Manitoba, from its geographical position and its peculiar characteristics may be regarded as the keystone of that mighty arch of sister provinces which spans the continent from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

And to think that this mighty arch is to have the key-stone knocked out of it by the promotion of measures that tend to sap the very fidelity of the people who live in that portion of the Dominion. I am glad to know that they are so well represented as they are by the hon. member of French nationality who sits on the other side of the House (Mr. LaRivière), who has championed so strenuously and ably the cause of education that, rely upon it, so long as he is here looking after their interests they suffer nothing from want of advocacy of their case.

I am embarrassed, not with the meagreness, but with the richness and fulness of this subject. I should like to dwell at greater length upon it, but the ground has been gone over so thoroughly, I have no desire to detain you at any greater length. When I listened to the bright and laconic observations of the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Foster), I was pleased beyond measure to observe the broad and statesman-like views he advocated. I would recommend every one, whether in the House or out of it, to read and ponder carefully every line of that admirable address, which is a credit to this Chamber and a credit to the public life of Canada, showing that we have growing up in this country a class of men whose attainments mark a progressive development in intellectual capacity which would be a credit to any country. In material progress we have something to show, and we trust to have more. Mixed up and divided as we are, I say it is extremely desirable that all differences of creed and nationality should be put on one side. For it is only by thorough agreement that we can promote those great principles that we inherited when the



great principles of confederation were carried out. I feel confident that no country could possibly have a brighter future before it than Canada. Edmund Burke declared that he did not govern himself by abstractions, and maintained that "the possible best is the absolute best." I now feel that the possible best for us, for Canada to-day is peace and good-will, and that peace and good-will is only to be maintained by carrying out the comprehensive measure that is before this House, and that was so thoroughly explained in the able address of the Minister of Justice (Mr. Dickey). Mr. Speaker, in concluding my remarks let me say that I look forward with great interest to the young men of Canada who are now supporting so ably the Conservative party of this

country. They know perfectly well that the principles upon which their associations have been based are those that have been laid down by the fathers of confederation. We have a great country, we have a prosperous people, we have a future before us that any nation in the world might look forward to with hope. Let us close up the phalanx; let there be no blanks. When the vote is taken, as it will be in a few hours, I trust that every Conservative will be able to say: I have done my duty to my people and to my country in demanding that the law propounded by this Government shall be carried out, in order to maintain the peace and happiness of the people who live so prosperously in this Dominion.

